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The accompanying sketch of a curious font is from a village church on the high road to Tournay; the foliage around it, of Norman character, is in low relief. The heads of knights would lead me to think it an offering of some returned from perilous adventures. I could get no information on the subject.—J. L.

THE AIR-SYPHON.

The notice which you took of Dr. Chowne's "Patent Air-Syphon System of Ventilation" has led many persons to inquire into it, and induces me to offer a few remarks upon its apparent paradoxicality. Both our present practice and theory would tend to prove the fallacy of Dr. Chowne's assertion, "that air circulates up the longer leg, and enters and moves down the shorter leg; and that this action is not prevented by making the shorter leg hot whilst the longer leg is cold."

The motion of air is produced (naturally) by a change of density, caused thermometrically, or hygrometrically,—or from the general principle by which the motion of a fluid is communicated to the lateral parts which are at rest. This communication of motion occurs in ordinary chimneys by the influence of air upon air, whenever the atmosphere is in motion, and impinging on the top of the chimney, either at a right angle or any greater angle. The effect, in Dr. Chowne's experiments, is produced by either one or other of these causes. In that which you describe as having been performed in his garden, the long leg ran over the top of the house, and, consequently, was exposed to a free current of air, from which the shorter leg in the garden was sheltered. In this case, the air moving over the top of the longer leg would communicate a motion to the air within it, which would far overpower the counteracting effect produced by the rarefaction of the shorter by the hot water: the effect might instantly be reversed by creating a stronger current over the mouth of the shorter leg. In connecting the various tubes from the room to his chimney, the effect is produced from the same cause, probably assisted by the rarefaction of the shaft by warm flues in the same stack.

If Dr. Chowne's theory be correct, how useless is Dr. Reid's enormous fire at the bottom of the longer leg of his syphon at the House of Commons (the shaft being 110 feet high), and how many hundred tons of fuel are annually wasted! Were Dr. Chowne's theory correct, how easy would it be to connect a descending stove, by a horizontal flue of unlimited length, to the chimney, or longer leg of the syphon, and always insure an upward current; yet every practical man knows that a great degree of rarefaction is required in the longer leg, or chimney, before the light gases generated in the stove can be made to descend and overcome the friction in the horizontal flue.

Neither is Dr. Chowne's *application* of the syphon new,—for in Tredgold's work "On Warming and Ventilation," p. 239, published in 1824, the inverted syphon is suggested, and recommended for the ventilation of rooms, although its action is there ascribed to very different causes than those laid down in the Doctor's specification. WM. JEAKES.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

The Christmas movement of holiday-keepers has made, it seems, an extraordinary amount of traffic by rail this season. Even the Euston-station, it would almost appear, was scarcely large enough for the additional crowds and packages collected; at least a large temporary tent, 60 feet wide by 20 feet high, with half-a-dozen fires, and lit with gas purposely laid on, had to be there provided on the arrival side, and fifty to sixty porters were engaged day and night from Saturday to Tuesday morning in hauling hampers out of the way of arrival. Thirty to forty vans, &c., were constantly at work in the delivery of all sorts of provender and good cheer, piled in packages reaching often up to second-floor windows, where the less scrupulous and more needy might have readily helped themselves. The departure side was equally full of bustle and holiday business.——How the Great Midland artery has served its office in the circulation of so rich a flow of the social *pabulum* *vitæ* it is hard to say; for those essential capillary conductors of it to the body politic, the porters, have refused to do their office, on the ground of a deficiency in their own particular supply of the needful. They have been twice drained within the year, to the extent of 1*s.* a week each time, off 18*s.*, and they think it hard that the directorial mismanagement and plunder should be repaid out of their pockets, which no one alleges have ever been either heavily or dishonestly filled,—a circumstance fully borne out by the fact that the porters of even a comparatively small and private company, such as Pickford's, have 20*s.* each per week, without a grumble. The obstruction of such a main way of the nation as the Midland, is itself a national question, however paltry and pitiful its basis. And over and above the inconvenience, confusion, loss, and danger,—when we look to the corruptibility of all animal tissue, whether flesh, fowl, or fish, and the loads of it accumulated in the Midland stations, the state of these stations at the present moment comes to be even a sanitary question of some little national importance to the public crowds frequenting them.——The masons, labourers, and others employed on the Sheffield station, &c., of the Manchester and Lincoln have been almost all paid off by the contractors, Messrs. Miller, Blackie, and Shortridge: the railway company, it is said, want funds. The Grimsby dock works, connected with the same line, have also been suspended.——It is proposed to make the railway arches at Manchester available as slaughter-houses. —— Some leading capitalists, it is said, mean to offer to relieve the railway companies of all responsibility in the working of their lines, guaranteeing a certain per centage clear of all expense or risk.——Mr. John Wheatcroft, C.E., one of the contractors for the High Tor tunnels at Matlock Bath, has taken the contract for the cuttings and tunnel of an extension line from Crookslands to Lindal-lane, on the border of Lancashire. —— A public entertainment has been given at Lowestoft to Mr. Peto, and it is proposed to call the new part of the town which has arisen in connection with the railway, harbour, and esplanade, by the name of Petoville.——A murder was lately committed in a French railway carriage. Such a crime could not occur during railway transit were the guards to have a regular beat as watchmen along the train, either outside or in; whereas, the helpless position of passengers, and, above all, of guards, at present, not only affords facilities, but actual temptations to crime. Such was the case in the late mail robberies on the Great Western.

London in 1543.—Whittock and Hyde have just published a large view of London, Westminster, and Southwark, as they appeared in 1543, from a drawing by Anthony Van Den Wyngrerde, in the Sutherland collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The monastery at Bermondsey is added, from a drawing in the collection of the late Mr. Upcot. The whole was copied and engraved by Mr. N. Whittock, and makes a very interesting work.

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